

Hercules Station

#24 The Good and the Bad: Life Aboard Hercules

Life on *Hercules* was a mix of experiences and emotions. Although a voyage offered a sailor the opportunity for solid employment and adventure, this could be tempered by discomfort if a storm was encountered during the trip.

On her first voyage, *Hercules* sailed from Camden, New Jersey around South America and then back north to San Francisco. This trip lasted 72 days and took her through two big storms.

Harry Frank, one of her crew, wrote a letter to his girl friend in which he stated, “Friday... the boat was rolling so much that one could hardly walk. In going from one place to another we had to hang on to anything we could get hold of. ...in the mess room when the mess boy would give you anything on a plate, you could not set the plate on the table but had to hold it in you hands [and] while sitting at the table you had to brace yourself or it would be no time at all before you were under the table or lying in some corner.”

Later, Harry reflected on one of the pleasures of the trip when he stated, “...we have seen flying fish by the thousands. At night lots of them land on deck. They are fine eating. Some nights we caught as [many] as two dozen of them.”

In the end Harry Frank summed up his *Hercules* voyage to his girlfriend by saying, “Dear if you... would ask me (how did you enjoy your trip), there are two answers to that question. I enjoyed the trip very much and I am not anxious for another experience like this...”